

Special Alumni Award

Don Veal honored for 29-year UW career

When Don Veal retired as UW president in 1987, he wrapped up "29 happy years" in Wyoming.

Veal, 1990 UW Medallion Service Award recipient, came to the Cowboy State in 1958 as an instructor in civil engineering. He also was a graduate student, earning an M.S. (1960) and a Ph.D. (1964) degree from the Engineering College. Veal was promoted to assistant professor in 1964, to associate professor and assistant director of UW's Natural Resources Research Institute two years later, and to professor and head of the Department of Atmospheric Science in 1971.

Veal's next big promotion came in 1980, when UW trustees named him vice president for research and graduate studies. The presidency followed in 1982, when he replaced Ed Jennings as the institution's 20th top administrator. Veal was the first UW alumnus to hold that position.

Veal played an instrumental role in establishing the Department of Atmospheric Science, though he modestly credits many "very talented people" with setting up the program. A regional authority in that area, he took a one-year leave of absence during 1976-77 to direct the National Hail Research Experiment of the National Center for Atmospheric Research.

Best of Both Worlds

Flying is a personal love of Veal's, one that he was able to

combine with his research interests. Since 1966, he has been involved with the development of airborne platforms to support atmospheric research programs. He worked on several airborne data systems as well as techniques to interface sensors to the atmosphere. His research interests are primarily in the areas of fluid dynamics and diffusion, aircraft performance under icing conditions, and windshear conditions and instrumentation. At UW, he rebuilt an old C-45, the university's first plane.

Teaching is another love, one that he says works nicely with research.

"I was one of those people who found the two (teaching and research) to be inextricably tied," Veal says. "I find that they are fundamentally the same. I don't have a favorite, because I found interaction with students is critical in both areas."

Veal took his teaching responsibilities seriously.

"Education, in my view, is not an assembly-line process," he notes.

Leading the Way

Veal was on a research project in Montana when Jennings called him about serving as acting president in 1981. It didn't take the trustees long to put him to work either — he held his first official meeting in Sheridan the day after saying yes.

UW prospered during the mid-1980s, despite many difficulties.



Don Veal

Veal credits that to "a significant emphasis" on quality of education.

Working with the Wyoming Legislature took up many hours during Veal's presidency. He traveled across the state to visit with members of both houses and other community leaders in order to keep them up-to-date on the university and its needs. Building a good relationship with the state's leaders was a high priority for Veal.

Why retire in 1987? When he accepted the position, Veal said he'd do so for five years. When that time

elapsed, he decided it was time to move on — Veal didn't want to be known as a president who stayed too long. He did stay for an extra year, however, while a search identified his replacement.

Particle Measuring Systems manufactures state-of-the-art instrumentation for measuring very small particles in air, liquids, gases, and on surfaces for the semiconductor, pharmaceutical and other industries. The company began in 1972, building meteorological instruments that measured cloud droplets and ice crystals in the atmosphere.

Professional Involvement

Veal is currently a member of the National Academy of Science/ National Research Council, National Weather Service Modernization Committee, University Corporation for Atmospheric Research Board of Trustees, Particle Measuring Systems Board, and UW's HT Person Endowment Initiating Committee.

Previous professional affiliations have included such organizations as: Blue Ribbon Committee on Quality Education in Wyoming, National Academy of Science/National Research Council Committee on Low-Altitude Windshear and Its Hazard to Aviation, Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education (WICHE), Western Athletic Conference Foundation.